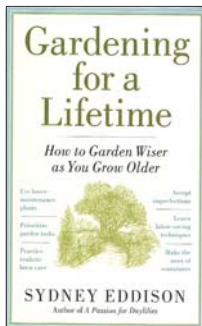




## One More Item for the Garden List

By Barbara Elmore, HCMG

Here's a gift for gardeners who also happen to be obsessive list makers: a longtime gardener and teacher advocates list making. Not just one list, but two. Or even three: a daily list, a master list, and a "punch" list for handyman chores.



List-making is not every gardener's habit, nor does it have to be. But the list makers among us recognize vindication when we see it. And Sydney Eddison, garden author (*A Passion for Daylilies*), vindicates us all with *Gardening for a Lifetime* (Timber Press, 2010). Even though she was a latecomer to the wisdom of lists, she understands them now.

Eddison, born in 1932 and still gardening in Connecticut, extols the benefits of list-making in Chapter 6, "Sanity Saver: Learning to Make Lists." More of a seat-of-the-pants gardener, she learned about lists from one of the people she hired as a garden helper for a few hours each week. The new aide was making a career change from corporate life to gardening, and she knew that the overwhelming job of helping manage Eddison's garden could be conquered only if Eddison decided what was most important (prioritizing). And Eddison could prioritize only if she made lists. While setting priorities and writing them down were foreign to this woman who had done everything herself, she recognized their value in attaining the organization she wanted. But lists are not the only new tools Eddison found useful as she learned how to garden wiser. And no matter the age, every gardener can learn something from Eddison. Sections at the end of each Chapter titled "Gleanings" sum up what she discovers in the process of aging with her garden over a 30-year span. She finds ways to feed her passion even as she compromises because of physical challenges.

For example, she learns the value and magic of flowering shrubs; of accepting nature's imperfections; that shade-tolerant plants can be easier to grow than sun-lovers; that loppers are hard on one's hands, so one should lop judiciously; and that major life changes, such as the loss of a spouse, can lead to new gardens or to gardening in new ways. She describes how she found helpers to work in her garden, even on a limited budget.

Eddison's advice is not cutting edge. She writes about practices that today's gardeners have already adopted because of a lack of time, space or money — container gardening, for example.

But if her advice does not create light-bulb moments, reading her book is like having a conversation with a friend. "How beautiful can you make your garden with the resources you still have at your command?" she asks. "This is the question I keep asking myself. I don't have the answer, but I'm working on it."

Her point is that gardeners should not let go of what they love because of new challenges. Make use of your surroundings, she advises. Make the most of what you have left.

If you are making a list, *Gardening for a Lifetime* should be on it.